

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
PROBATION DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION
JUVENILE SERVICES
INTERVIEWS JULY 31, AUGUST 1–3, 2000

Interview Process

A request was made to the Los Angeles Probation Department to schedule on-site interviews on July 31 and August 1–3, 2000, with seven stakeholder groups. With the exception of the chief probation officer and senior staff, the groups were divided into juvenile and adult services. Because no interviews were scheduled with the county administrator's office or with juvenile and adult public and private community agencies, this report reflects the views of only four stakeholder groups:

1. Judges and court administrators
2. Chief probation officer and senior staff
3. Line supervisors and probation officers
4. Prosecutors and defense attorneys

A total of 57 people were interviewed. This number included the following:

- Two judges from juvenile services
- Three court administrators
- Eleven senior probation managers
- Twenty-five first-line juvenile and adult probation supervisors and line staff
- Twelve supervisors and line staff representing juvenile halls and camps
- Four prosecutors and defense attorneys

Several stakeholder groups addressed the same questions. Separate reports addressing juvenile and adult services have been prepared for Los Angeles County. Although many of the answers in both reports are the same or similar, the questions were addressed separately by both juvenile and adult services stakeholders. In some instances,

contradictory responses were given. These areas of contradiction are reported under the questions to which they pertain.

Prior to the on-site interviews, several actions occurred. Eighteen categories related to juvenile and adult services were developed. Each category included several questions specific to that topic. These questions were discussed, modified, and clarified at a meeting with representatives from the six counties selected to be part of this process. To accommodate the time frames of this project, participating counties were asked to address the questions in writing and to provide as much information as possible prior to the actual interviews. *This report combines all responses and does not specifically identify the part of the justice system reporting.* The 18 categories are as follows:

- I. Demographic Information
- II. Organizational Structure
- III. Department Mission and Objectives
- IV. Policies and Procedures
- V. Monitoring and Evaluation Process
- VI. Management Information Systems
- VII. Funding Sources
- VIII. Probation Services
- IX. Specialized Court Services
- X. Probation and Private Service Provider Partnerships
- XI. Staff Development and Training
- XII. Communication Systems
- XIII. Program or Service Gaps
- XIV. Partnership with Judiciary
- XV. Partnership with Prosecutors and Defense Attorneys
- XVI. Partnership with Other Collaborative County Departments
- XVII. Juvenile Probation Partnership with Education System
- XVIII. Strengths of Probation Department

LOS ANGELES COUNTY JUVENILE SERVICES DESCRIPTION

A total of 38 stakeholders addressed the questions related to juvenile services. The participant breakdown was as follows:

- Two judges
- Eleven senior managers
- Eleven supervisors and probation officers
- Twelve supervisors and line staff representing juvenile halls and camps
- Two prosecutors and defense attorneys

I. Demographic Information

A. Description of the county

Los Angeles County, one of California's original 27 counties, is one of the nation's largest, covering 4,083 square miles. This area is more than 800 square miles larger than the combined expanse of the states of Delaware and Rhode Island. Los Angeles County includes the islands of San Clemente and Santa Catalina. It is bordered on the east by Orange and San Bernardino counties, on the north by Kern County, on the west by Ventura County, and on the south by the Pacific Ocean.

Its 1999 estimated population of 9.7 million distinguishes Los Angeles as the county with the largest population in the nation. The racial mix in Los Angeles County includes 3,194,753 Caucasians, 4,359,095 Hispanics, 1,208,966 Asians/Pacific Islanders, 937,216 African Americans, and 27,810 Native Americans. Approximately 29 percent of California's population live in Los Angeles County.

There are 88 cities within the county. More than 65 percent of the county is unincorporated. For the 1 million people living in those areas, the local board of supervisors is their “city council.”

The county budget for fiscal year 1999–2000 is \$15 billion. Thirty-seven percent of the revenue comes from the state, 27 percent from the federal government, 14 percent from property taxes, and 22 percent from other sources.

Los Angeles County is the largest employer in the five-county region, with 89,358 budgeted positions. More than 27,000 of these jobs are in law and justice. There are 614 courtrooms, 428 authorized judges, and 144 authorized commissioners.

B. Size of probation department

The probation department was established in 1903. The department has nearly 4,550 employees and serves all the municipal and superior courts in the county. Its employees staff over 50 work locations, including juvenile detention centers, residential treatment facilities, and field service offices.

C. Offender population, including types of offenses

- The 1988 Los Angeles County juvenile offender population between the ages of 10 and 17 was 1,052,600
- In 1999, there were approximately 23,300 juveniles on probation. In 1999, crimes against person was the major type of offense, followed by property and drug crimes
- At the end of 1999, there were 10,696 offenders on regular probation, 2,527 in Gang Alternative Prevention programs, 1,483 in gang units, and 1,155 in school crime suppression caseloads

D. Juvenile hall staffing and population data

There are three juvenile hall facilities in Los Angeles County. On July 12, 2000, the three juvenile halls had the following capacities and daily populations:

Central

Capacity	418 (388 male, 30 female)
Daily population	562 (492 male, 70 female)
Over/under capacity	144 over (104 male, 40 female)
Budgeted positions FY 1999–2000	350

Los Padrinos

Capacity	421 (335 male, 86 female)
Daily population	546 (454 male, 87 female)
Over/under capacity	120 over (119 male, 1 female)
Budgeted positions FY 1999–2000	344

B.J. Nidorf

Capacity	675 (574 male, 101 female)
Daily population	781 (640 male, 141 female)
Over/under capacity	106 over (66 male, 40 female)
Budgeted positions FY 1999–2000	404

Total juvenile hall capacity	1,514 (1,297 male, 217 female)
Total juvenile hall daily population	1,884 (1,586 male, 298 female)
Total juvenile hall over/under capacity	370 over (289 male, 81 female)

Camps

- Los Angeles County has 18 probation camp facilities: 17 for boys and 1 for girls
- There are 2,099 available rated beds
- The current camp population is 2,304, or 205 over capacity
- The camp's average population is 115
- The average camp stay is 23.5 weeks
- These camps are not modeled after boot camps

- Upon leaving the camp, juveniles are sent home on probation or sent to placement, or jurisdiction is terminated
- Los Angeles County has one secure juvenile psychiatric care facility
- The psychiatric facility has a capacity of 100 rated beds (60 for boys and 40 for girls)
- The length of stay in the psychiatric facility is 7 months

II. Organizational Structure

A. History of structure

- No information provided

B. Theory behind organizational structure

- No information provided

C. Reporting lines of authority

- Five layers of management:
 - Chief
 - Deputy chief
 - Bureau chief
 - Manager
 - Supervisor
- Lines of authority are consistent in both the juvenile and adult divisions
- Five layers of management are working effectively

D. Discuss organizational structure strengths

- Appears to be the appropriate levels of management staff

E. Suggested organizational changes

- Organizational structure is working well

III. Department Mission and Objectives

A. Written department mission statement

- There is a department mission statement that was developed about five years ago
- The mission statement is currently being reexamined

B. Written juvenile services mission statements

- Juvenile probation services has a separate mission statement
- Juvenile halls and camps use the department mission statement

C. Written annual objectives for juvenile services

- Some specialized programs have written objectives
- There are written objectives for grant programs
- There are no annual objectives for department employees
- There are no objectives for most of the juvenile halls and camps
- There are general objectives for department management

D. Discuss staff involvement in the mission statement process

- A committee representing line staff was involved
- Focus groups were used
- A survey was used
- Top-down approach is used in juvenile halls and camps
- Line staff expressed interest in being involved

E. Discuss how objectives are implemented within the department

- Objectives are developed collaboratively to complement management's objectives
- Long-term objectives are developed by executive staff

IV. Policies and Procedures

A. Does the department have a policies and procedures manual?

How often is it revised?

- A department manual exists
- Each bureau has a manual
- Manual has not been updated for several years
- Manual is available on the Internet
- Manual is in the process of being rewritten for juvenile halls and camps

B. How are policies and procedures implemented?

- Notices
- Directives
- Verbally with managers
- Executive committee to prospective bureau chiefs
- Supervisory review
- Training courses related to policies and procedures
- Juvenile halls and camps as part of orientation
- Juvenile halls and camps have Department of Corrections audits

C. Describe the process used to prepare policies

- Policies are generally initiated by executive management
- Committees of subject-matter experts are used
- Supervisors are involved in committees
- Juvenile hall and camp staff can participate but need others to cover posts

D. Describe staff input in policy development

- Ad hoc committees
- Standard committees for juvenile and adult services

E. Describe the process used to monitor policies and procedures

- Appropriate controls are put in place

V. Monitoring and Evaluation Process

A. Describe the evaluation procedures for programs and services

- Grant programs have evaluation components as part of the award system
- All contracted programs have an evaluation component
- This area needs to be refined
- Not all programs are evaluated
- RAND corporation provides outside evaluations for some specific programs
- There is no in-house evaluation and research unit

B. Are evaluations designed on performance-based measures?

- Specialized juvenile programs have evaluation components
- Regular caseloads do not have performance-based measures

C. Describe how monitoring and evaluation information is reported to the CPO

- CPO receives reports from each bureau that address status of programs
- Daily contact with management and staff

D. Describe how this information is integrated into programs and services

- No information presented

E. Describe how information from evaluations is integrated into management decisions

- Changes are mandated
- Management is open to change based on evaluation information

VI. Management Information Systems

A. Describe the current information system

- Countywide mainframe implemented in 1992
- Juvenile system tracks arrest records and court history
- Juvenile hall accesses probation and public defender systems

B. Assess the efficiency of the information system

- Considered 85 to 95% efficient
- About 50% of the information is not accurate

C. Describe how information needs are determined

- Department's business units identify areas that need automation
- The Information Systems Office conducts assessment and preliminary requirements analysis and makes recommendations to executive management
- The Information Systems Office makes recommendations on new technology solutions
- Executive management reviews recommendations and funding requirements and decides on suggested implementations

D. Does a users committee exist and what is the composition?

- Several users committees focus on different functional areas such as juvenile and adult services and administration
- Committees include executive, operations, and technical staff members
- Juvenile field representatives are on specific program committees

E. Describe how the MIS interacts with other parts of the system

- Juvenile information steering committee includes court managers, public defender, and district attorney
- Gang units can access information from other system stakeholders

F. Discuss additional information needs

- Integrated information systems
- Need for proactive information from other agencies

- Electronic transfer of documentation
- Police reports
- District attorney information
- Sharing of information with law enforcement agencies
- Steering committee with other departments
- Computerized financial information
- Additional technical staff to service juvenile halls and camps
- Automation of the juvenile halls and camps needs/risk assessments
- Elimination of redundant data entry

G. What are the computer equipment needs?

- Personal computers
- Laptop computers
- School-based probation officers need personal computers
- Remote access to mainframe systems
- Juvenile hall and camp supervisors are in need of technology equipment

VII. Funding Sources

A. What is the total budget (juvenile and adult breakdown)?

- For FY 2000–2001, the total budget is \$388,165 million

Juvenile Services

▪ Juvenile investigations	\$10,923,000
▪ Juvenile supervision	\$51,114,000
▪ Juvenile placements	\$ 7,786,000
▪ Detention services	\$97,326,000
▪ Residential treatment	\$78,303,000
▪ Care of court wards	\$8,336,000
Total	\$253,788,000

Adult Services

▪ Pretrial services	\$17,988,000
▪ Adult investigations	\$30,397,000
▪ Adult supervision	\$37,280,000
▪ Support program	\$32,449,000
▪ Administration	\$16,263,000
Total	\$134,377,000

B. What are your various funding sources?

- TANF allocation
- TANF camps and ranches
- Title IV-E
- Realignment dollars
- Other state grants/programs
- Other federal grants/programs
- County general fund
- Miscellaneous revenue
- Intrafund transfers

C. Where are your greatest funding item deficits?

- Deferred maintenance of over \$300 million
- Staffing in all bureaus
- Additional support for peace officers
- Vehicles
- Ammunition
- Cell phones
- Nextell phones
- Updated gang unit staffing ratio
- Address building safety issues

D. Level of CPO control over budget

- Has control over department budget
- Participates in county board committees

E. Large budget category comparisons for the past five years

- FY 1997: \$294,153,000
- FY 1998: \$304,640,000
- FY 1999: \$341,113,000
- FY 2000: \$370,294,000
- FY 2001: \$388,165,000
- The budget increase from 1997 to 2001 is \$94,120,000, or over 24%
- The county general fund contribution to the 2001 budget is 58.3%
- The county general fund contribution for the past five years has ranged from 57 to 62%

VIII. Probation Services

A. Discuss the automated and validated needs/risk tools being used

- None for juvenile probation services
- Juvenile halls and camps use a needs/risk assessment

B. Describe any specialized assessment services you provide

- RAND is working on validation of several assessment instruments

C. What are the current probation supervision workload standards?

- There are currently no workload standards
- There is no system of equal distribution of workloads among probation officers
- Specialized caseloads have maximum cases per officer
- Yardstick standards are in place for all caseloads
- Workload standards are not based on time-study information

D. Describe how these workload standards are determined

- Workload standards are the result of negotiations with collective bargaining units

E. Describe the case plan process (supervision plan)

- Every juvenile case has a written supervision plan
- Each probation officer determines the plan individually
- All specialized programs have case plans
- A strength-based model is used

F. Describe the continuum of services offered to probationers from least to most restrictive sanctions

- There is no formalized continuum of services
- The court orders sanctions

G. Are there eligibility criteria for entering and exiting each program and service? Please describe.

- Determined by individual probation office

H. What sanctions along the continuum are *not* available?

- Sanctions are determined by the court
- Mental health services, both out- and inpatient services
- Special-education services
- Wrap-around services
- Increased restorative justice program
- General lack of resources

I. Describe the highest priority sanctions needs

- Emancipation programs for juveniles without family support
- Drug treatment programs
- Locked mental health facilities

- Sex offender services

J. Describe the role the judiciary plays in the intermediate sanctions system

- Approximately 80 to 90% of judges accept the recommendations of the probation officer
- Varies dramatically from judge to judge
- Strong partnership with court officers
- Judges have a hands-on approach with juveniles

K. What role does the judiciary play in determining the types of supervision sanctions needed?

- Judges are very active
- Judges have specific ideas about the supervision plan
- Judges work in strong partnership with court officers who represent the juvenile halls

L. Are there any mandated sanctions?

- None listed

IX. Specialized Court Services

A. List the specialized programs in your county

- Juvenile drug court
- Teen court
- Informal juvenile and traffic court
- Early disposition programs
- Gang prevention units
- Pretrial informal supervision

B. Describe the relationship between these programs and probation

- Specialized courts use a partnership approach and have a good working relationship with other agencies
- Juvenile halls and camps have excellent relationships with a myriad of community agencies and services
- Prosecutor has a good relationship with probation

X. Probation and Private Service Provider Partnerships

A. Describe the services private vendors provide to the probation department

- Family and individual counseling
- Drug treatment services
- Parenting skills
- Anger management
- Mental health services
- Domestic violence counseling
- Community service programs
- Family preservation programs
- After-school programs
- Voucher programs
- Recreation services

B. How does probation staff view these services or programs?

- General observation is very positive
- Excellent collaborative relationships
- Eighty-two private contracts

XI. Staff Development and Training

A. Describe the specific training subjects offered to staff

- Each new probation officer receives 240 hours of training by the state

- Each probation officer must have 40 hours of training annually
- Each institution worker is required to take 24 hours of annual training
- Each new supervisor and manager takes 80 hours of required training
- Each employee receives an in-house orientation program
- There is a training unit
- Training is offered using internal staff as instructors
- Training is offered by contracted instructors

B. List the training courses that are mandatory

- Field probation officer core: 182 hours of generic training
- Juvenile corrections officer core: 158 hours of basic entry training
- Basic supervisor core: 80 hours of instruction after promotion
- Manager/administrator core: 80 hours of instruction after promotion

C. Describe how staff training needs are determined

- Supervisors determine officer needs
- Supervisors provide training on site
- A staff training unit addresses training needs
- Supervisors discuss training needs jointly with officers
- There is a yearly survey of training needs
- Juvenile hall and camps have limited access to community training opportunities

D. Describe the process used to get staff input for training needs

- Training officer conducts an annual staff development needs inquiry
- An excellent catalogue of training courses is available to staff
- There is a lack of informal and internal training offered to institution staff

E. Describe the types of cross-training taking place

- Some occurs within the department
- Staff recognizes a need for cross-training and welcomes opportunities

- Core classes are offered in a cross-training setting
- Each bureau offers some training opportunities

F. Describe the management training being offered

- After promotion, an 80-hour course is available for supervisors or managers
- Each year thereafter, 16 hours of training are offered
- Leadership training is provided for anyone who wishes to attend
- It would be helpful to offer management training prior to promotions
- Staff may be on the job several months before training is offered

XII. Communication Systems

A. Describe the department's staff meeting schedule

- Executive team meets twice a month
- Staff in each bureau meet monthly
- Committees are formed for specialized functions or unique needs
- Meetings with line staff and top management are infrequent

B. Describe the process used to disseminate day-to-day information to line staff

- E-mail
- Memoranda
- Directives
- Chain-of-command process
- Department intranet

XIII. Program or Service Gaps

A. Discuss the resources, services, or programs you need to provide a more effective probation service

- Mental health resources

- Substance abuse treatment services
- Joint family caseload between juvenile and adult probation officers
- Employment resources
- Vocational training resources
- More accurate computerized assessment tools
- Technology improvements
- Mental health treatment in institutions
- Need for more wrap-around services
- Residential treatment beds for the drug court
- Information system to track juveniles in detention
- Improved aftercare placements

B. Are any programs mandated?

- None discussed

XIV. Partnership with Judiciary

A. What services does probation provide for the judiciary?

- Court officers
- Staffing of specialized programs
- Disposition reports
- Pre-plea reports
- Supplemental reports
- Violation reports
- Status reports
- Bench warrants
- Dependency and delinquency reports
- Detention and custody reports

B. Describe the relationship between the judiciary and the probation department

- Excellent at the top levels of the department
- Relationship is open and cordial
- Probation sees its role as a service to the courts
- No conflict with judges
- Reports to court could be more timely, but timeliness is improving
- Probation staff feel free to present positions to judges
- Judges are asked to report on court reports
- Relationship with judiciary is inconsistent
- Varies dramatically from judge to judge
- Many judges feel probation officers offer little to the case
- Lack of services is an issue
- Probation reports are not consistent
- Probation lacks good judgment in some cases
- The relationship between probation and the judiciary is rocky
- Prosecutor offered training to probation, but it was not accepted
- Probation has an outstanding relationship with the judiciary on dependency and delinquency matters

C. Describe the process used by probation and the judiciary to ensure that the judiciary has the broadest possible sentencing alternatives

- More resources requested from county supervisors
- Judiciary was not asked to participate in probation's budget hearing requests for sentencing alternatives

D. What changes or enhancements are needed to improve this partnership?

- Regular meetings with judiciary
- Cross-training between judiciary and probation
- Judges need to be more consistent
- Clerk function improvement will improve the partnership
- Need for more court officer training
- Better sharing of information

- Increased automation
- Consistency in reports and recommendations
- Eliminate late probation reports
- Training of probation staff
- Need more mental health resources
- Need more probation officers
- More emphasis on preventing juveniles from entering the system
- Judges need more thorough information from probation
- More services to juvenile halls and camps

XV. Partnership with Prosecutors and Defense Attorneys

A. What are the points of interaction among probation, prosecutors, and public defenders?

- Prosecutor and defense attorney discuss dependency, delinquency, and mental health issues with probation
- Direct filings
- Constant exchange between court officers and prosecutor
- Pre-plea reports
- Limited exchange of information with defense attorneys and probation
- Disposition reports
- Progress reports
- Probation officers now direct violations to the court instead of working through the prosecutor's office

B. Describe the relationship among prosecutors, defense attorneys, and the probation department

- Prosecutor and probation relationship is generally good
- There are some strained relationships with the prosecutor
- Probation is not involved in the pre-plea negotiations among defense attorney, prosecutor, and judge

- Defense attorneys and probation have limited contact with each other
- Defense attorneys are involved in camp mental health programs
- Defense attorneys and prosecutors have frequent staff turnover, which hampers the relationship
- Prosecutor, defense attorney, and probation work together on task forces
- The relationship is competitive and strained
- Viewed as a weak partnership
- Relationship with specialized units is good
- Relationship between defense attorney and probation is adversarial
- Good cooperation at the management level
- Probation leans toward the prosecutor position
- Probation, prosecutor, and defense attorney all work together on dependency and delinquency matters
- Uniform citation system is a good partnership, with all parties involved

C. Discuss the exchange of information among probation, prosecutors, and defense attorneys

- Copy of petition
- Police reports
- Probation has access to information submitted to the court
- Probation can access anything in the prosecutor file
- Probation requests information from defense attorney

D. What changes or enhancements are needed to improve the partnership?

- Defense attorney and probation have limited communication and need to improve in this area
- Defense attorney has to learn the functions of probation
- Trust among probation, defense attorney, and prosecutor needs to be improved
- Prosecutors and defense attorneys have frequent staff turnover and need longer assignments in juvenile services

- Change the negative perception held by prosecutor and defense attorney of probation's usefulness
- Judiciary has leadership role in reducing the adversarial relationship in juvenile court
- Probation needs a higher quality of staff
- Training needs to be improved
- There is limited effort given to juveniles making restitution
- Too much down time in the courtroom
- Probation needs to provide more services
- Probation has an identity crisis over its law enforcement and social work roles
- A collaborative relationship needs to be developed
- Defense attorneys need additional staff
- Relationship between defense attorney and probation needs to be less adversarial
- Probation needs to be more proactive in meeting the needs of juveniles

XVI. Partnership with Other Collaborative County Departments

A. What are the points of interaction with these departments?

- Stakeholders were not scheduled for interviews

B. Describe the relationship between probation and these departments

- Probation has collaborative relationships with all departments
- Probation participates in regular multiagency meetings to address common issues

C. Discuss the exchange of information between probation and these departments

- Stakeholders were not scheduled for interviews

D. What changes or enhancements are needed to improve this collaborative relationship?

- Expectations need clarification
- Issues need to be addressed in a more timely manner

XVII. Juvenile Probation Partnership with Education System

A. Describe the relationship between the education system and the juvenile probation system

- Visions do not always match
- Quality of services needs to be improved
- Probation needs to access critical school information
- School-based probation program is positive
- School is too quick to expel a juvenile from school

B. What specialized programs or services are provided to juvenile probationers by the education system?

- School-based partnership programs
- Gang units work closely with school system
- Joint membership on the school attendance review board
- Probation outreach programs extend into the schools

C. Discuss the exchange of information between juvenile probation and the education system

- There is almost no exchange with probation supervision
- Many substitute teachers are used in juvenile halls and camps
- Quality of teachers is not good in juvenile halls and camps
- Juveniles are too easily expelled from school in the juvenile halls and camps

XVIII. Strengths of Probation Department

A. List and discuss the elements of the probation department services that you believe are outstanding or exceptional

- Juvenile halls and camps are innovative and well managed
- Excellent progress on automation
- Staff is very resilient
- Ability to absorb new staff and make changes
- Determined and dedicated staff
- School-based programs are excellent
- Productive Contracts are operational with other branches of law enforcement
- Community outreach programs are good
- Repeat offender prevention program has been effective
- Dependency and delinquency system interaction

Exemplary Practices and Programs

The system of interaction among the judiciary, probation, prosecutor, and defense attorney on dependency and delinquency issues appears to be a model that can be applied to other counties. Determination of the appropriate system to treat the dependent or delinquent juvenile is in constant debate around the nation.

